



Papul's aide held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department of police has arrested a close associate of former independent lawmaker Kazi Papul, who was sentenced to seven years in jail in a human trafficking case by a Kuwait court last year.

Sadiqur Rahman Monir was arrested in a money-laundering case from Dhaka's Khilgaon area on Wednesday, Humayun Kabir, special superintendent (financial crime unit) of CID, told a press briefing yesterday.

Monir was a close associate of Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul. Over Tk 38 crore, amassed from human trafficking, was deposited in one of his bank accounts. The money was later transferred to different accounts as per Papul's order, the CID official said.

Monir's arrest is a major development in the case as prime accused Papul is in a Kuwait jail, he said.

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A long-tailed shrike waiting for game. This bird, widely found across Asia, preys on insects like grasshoppers, beetles, along with lizards, frogs, small birds and small mammals. It takes most of its prey on the ground. The photo was taken in Chattogram's Sagorika area recently. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



How to manage PMS

STAR HEALTH DESK

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) refers to certain symptoms many women go through every month ahead of their menstrual periods.

The symptoms can be both physical and emotional. The common emotional symptoms include irritability and rapid changes in mood. The common physical symptoms include skin problems, tender breasts, bloating, and exhaustion.

It is thought that hormonal changes during the menstruation cycle play a role behind PMS. However, exactly what causes it is still unknown mainly due to lack of research.

Nevertheless, there are many measures which have been found helpful in managing the symptoms.

In most cases changes in lifestyle work fine to keep symptoms under control. The success of such behavioural changes in relieving symptoms varies from person to person.

Reduction of salt intake lessens PMS effects and

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar-based narcotics smugglers are supplying the synthetic drug "ice" to Bangladesh by taking only 20 or 30 percent of the payment in advance in cash or hundi, according to the Rapid Action Battalion.

Drug smugglers from either side of the border meet in the deep sea pretending to be fishermen, Rab has learnt following the arrest of five members of an ice-smuggling syndicate on Wednesday night from Munshiganj.

Rab recovered about 12 kilograms of ice worth about Tk 50 crore -- making it the largest haul of recovery in recent history -- from the arrestees as well as one lakh pieces yaba, two foreign pistols, Myanmar SIM cards, Tk 1.64 lakh in cash and one lakh Myanmar kyat.

In the deep sea, they communicate with one another using long-range flashlights, and in 20 to 25 minutes, the parties exchange ice and money in the deep sea.

The syndicate, which has at least 15 members, always moved in two engine boats: one followed the other and the consignment would always be in a boat behind, Rab learnt from the arrestees Jashim Uddin, 32; Maksud Mia, 29; Riaz Uddin, 23; Saheen Alam, 28; and Shamsul Alam, 35.



HOW 'ICE' IS DEALT

- Transaction done in deep sea
- Smugglers go in pretending to be fishermen
- Communicate with long range flashlights
- Ice enters through St Martin's
- Divided into small packages and sent to Dhaka

The consignment is first taken to Saint Martin and then to Sonadia Island, from where the arrestees hail. Ice is then transferred to Sandwip, where it is divided into small packages and sent to the Barisal, Munshiganj, Manikganj and

Narayanganj.

By road, the drugs are then transported to Dhaka and elsewhere.

The syndicate used to buy per 10-gram ice from Myanmar for Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 and sold those in Bangladesh for Tk 25,000 to Tk 35,000, said Khandker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, at the press conference yesterday.

The price went up after the law enforcers stepped up vigilance and supply tightened, he said quoting the arrestees as saying.

Asked why the border forces are not able to detect the consignments, Moin said the syndicate employed different techniques to douse law enforcers' eyes.

"They would even stuff the drug inside dried fish and fruits," he said, adding that as long as there is demand, the syndicate will try to come up with novel ways to smuggle in the drug.

Of the arrestees, Jashim has a salt business and in name of exporting 'salt', he would visit Myanmar and coordinate the smuggling racket with the Myanmar-based narcotic syndicate, said Rab.

He has been involved in the smuggling of yaba for the last six to seven years.

Saheen is wanted in two cases, Shamsul in three cases and Maksud in six cases. Rab is now conducting drives to trace the other members of the syndicate.

State minister's son beat up wife: PBI probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Musheq Alam Saikat, son of State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam, had physically abused and attempted to murder his ex-wife Tasnova Iqbal, according to a police investigation report.

The report said Tasnova was battered multiple times and she suffered injuries in different parts of her body. In 2020, Saikat had struck the back of her head with a metal vase, with the intent to kill her, it said.

PBI Inspector Kabir Hossain conducted the investigation and submitted the report to a Dhaka court recently. He had initiated the probe following a court order, which came after Tasnova sued Saikat in November over the matter.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the PBI report yesterday.

The report also mentioned it was difficult to find anyone willing to testify against Saikat because "the defendant's family is an influential one".

Saikat had formally slapped a private television channel with a Tk 100-crore lawsuit for reporting on an ongoing child custody battle between him and Tasnova.

According to the report, Saikat had been physically abusive towards Tasnova since their marriage in 2015. "Around 10:00am on February 8, 2020, the complainant went to the defendant's house to see their four-year-old daughter. She was accompanied by her mother and their

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Seals help Japanese researchers collect data under ice

REUTERS, Tokyo

A seal wearing a helmet with an antenna might look unusual, but eight Weddell seals, each with a 580g monitoring device on their heads, have been helping Japanese researchers survey the waters under the thick ice sheet in Antarctica.

Tapped for a research project between March and November 2017 - winter in Antarctica - these seals were equipped with the head-mounted conductivity, temperature and depth sensor, which allows scientists to collect observation data, such as water temperatures and salt levels, in areas with extremely harsh environmental conditions.

Project leader Nobuo Kokubun said such research helps scientists trace the animals' behavioural patterns and ecology.

"During the summer, we can go to Antarctica on icebreakers to conduct actual research activities, so that we can collect data there. But during the winter, such things cannot be done in so many places," Kokubun said during an

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SANCTIONS ON RAB

Momen asks US lawmakers to help lift them

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has sought support of two US lawmakers to have the sanctions on the Rapid Action Battalion and seven of its current and former officials lifted on a priority basis.

During a virtual meeting with Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY) and Congressman James P McGovern (D-MA), co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, on March 1, he said Dhaka was willing to work closely with the US to find ways to have the sanctions waived.

Momen was visiting New York from February 23 to March 2 to attend official meetings at the United Nations. He is currently on his way back home.

Expressing concern over the US sanctions imposed on the Rab on December 10, he told the lawmakers that Bangladesh has always shown its readiness to deal with specific allegations against Rab and its officials.

He mentioned that the Rab has emerged as the most efficient law enforcement agency in Bangladesh over the years, and has

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Tied with nothing but a few pieces of rope, construction equipment, used for piling, dangerously sticks out of a pickup on a street in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday. If the ropes snap, these objects can fly towards vehicles following closely behind. Two men are also travelling on top of the equipment, putting their lives at risk.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS